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 See Mention paper.

A Few Precious

Japanese Swords

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THANKS TO THE COB

By Richard B. Shelton

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They faced each other in a corner of the vine covered veranda, Frost red in the face and thoroughly angry, Miss Sterling with set lips and flashing eyes. Beyond the stretch of well kept lawn the lake shimmered in the July sunshine and the leaves of the poplars drooped dejectedly in the heat, but in that particular corner of the veranda where the two irate young people glared at each other the atmosphere was that of bleak December.

"When I see you again," said Frost curtly over his shoulder as he strode toward the steps, "it will be when you send for me."

"And when I want you," the girl returned in a shaking voice, "I'll come for you; I'll beg you to return; I'll grovel at your feet."

Frost bowed low, so low that the ironic deference made the girl bite her lips. Then he put his hat very firmly



TO HIS UNUTTERABLE JOY AND ASTONISHMENT SHE WAS UNHURT.

on his head and marched down the path between the rows of laurel trees; his broad shoulders stiffly erect, his head very high and his faith in women badly shaken.

Before he had reached the street he was telling himself he was many inconceivable kinds of an ass, and a vague desire to go back to her took possession of him, but this course was out of the question, and he strode sullenly up the street, bolstering up his pride with such snatches of the conversation as he could remember.

Miss Sterling, standing, white and shaking, by the veranda rail, watched him go down the path. She was well aware that Frost was the sort of man who lived up to his word. She had a premonition that if he left in this way it would be forever. She gripped the rail, and her breath came fast. Something like a panic must have seized her, for when he was far down the path she called: "Sid! Oh, Sid!" But in such a weak voice, which her pride was striving mightily to suppress altogether, that Frost did not hear it and kept on his way without so much as turning his head.

Even when he reached the street and was lost to sight behind the high hedge she still stood there by the rail. She was angry with Frost for going away and angry with herself for sending him.

She sank into a wicker chair and stared helplessly at the lake, which shimmered in the heat. There was a suspicious blur before her eyes. This would never do, she told herself. What she needed was action. She rose with a view of seeking the links and playing twice around the course. She was halfway down the path when she saw Higgins, the groom, coming up the drive.

"Higgins," she called, "you may put the cob in the trap."

"Beg pardon, mum," Higgins demurred, "but the cob's green and ain't fit for ladies drivin', mum."

Miss Sterling stamped her foot.

"The cob in the trap, Higgins, I said!"

Higgins made his way to the stable, mumbling under his breath, but five minutes later the trap was at the door. Miss Sterling climbed in and took the reins. Higgins let go the cob's head and by dint of a wild scramble managed to land in the trap as the cob bolted for the gate. They tore down the driveway and swung into the street. Higgins, his dignity by this time fully recovered, sat beside Miss Sterling with folded arms and impassive face.

They drove around the lake at a reckless pace. The girl gave the cob his head, and the cob made the most of his opportunity. They bumped over stones that lifted the groom a foot from the seat and swung corners that sent the trap on to one wheel. Higgins covertly watched his young mistress' face and prayed mentally.

On the other side of the lake a cool, wooded road branched from the lake drive. Miss Sterling swung the cob into this, and for the first time in his ten years' service Higgins took the initiative in conversation.

"Beg pardon, mum; the road's not safe, mum. They do be rollin' it with a road roller."

Miss Sterling smiled grimly. "So much the better," she said and flicked the cob with the whip. The cob responded with a jump that bade fair to dislocate Higgins' neck, and the trap went tearing up the road.

When Frost left the house he walked aimlessly around the upper end of the lake, reviewing mentally every word of the quarrel. On the far side of the lake he paused before the little wooded road that branched off the lake drive, and because the little wooded road seemed to offer the peace and quiet he sought he turned into it and walked leisurely through the mottled shadow cast by the branches above his head.

He had proceeded a mile or so when he came upon the steam roller bumping and scraping over the broken stone with which the roadbed was being repaired. For lack of better occupation he perched on a neighboring wall and watched the roller wending its ponderous way back and forth.

He had been there perhaps an hour when he heard the whir of rapidly moving wheels. He looked up to see a well known trap drawn by a sprightly cob come smartly around the turn of the road. In an instant all was confusion, for the cob at the sight of the roller stood erect on his hind legs. There was a little feminine shriek and a howl of fear from Higgins. The laborers on the road yelled excitedly.

The cob came down on all fours again and plunged madly into the wall close to Frost's perch. The trap reeled crazily. There was a sound of smashing spokes. Miss Sterling was tossed from the driving seat into a clump of bushes, and Higgins sailed over the wall like some ungainly fowl. The cob kicked himself clear of the wreck and galloped snorting up the road.

Frost ran to the girl and lifted her from the bushes. To his unutterable joy and astonishment she was unhurt. All at once he fell to laughing happily.

"See here, you've come to me! You've groveled at my feet!" he cried.

At that moment Higgins crawled painfully over the fence, his hat gone and his tousled hair bristling with burdock burs.

"He ain't no ladies' horse, mum," he began in deprecation.

Miss Sterling, supported by Frost's arm, laughed lightly.

"Higgins, he's a dear," she declared. Something from Frost's pocket was slid deftly into Higgins' palm.

"The cob, mum?" Higgins inquired ingeniously.

Whereat Frost laughed immoderately, and Miss Sterling flushed.

They Were Brothers.

The late P. T. Barnum was a keen student of human nature as well as a natural humorist, and nothing which set forth human traits that were odd or amusing escaped his attention. He was very fond of telling stories of incidents that brought out features in human character—one of which, that delighted him immensely, was connected with the Siamese twins.

When he was exhibiting those oriental freaks the press of the country made them widely known, and they became very soon one of his best drawing cards.

One day there came to see them a back country rustic who was perfectly absorbed in them and inquisitive enough in regard to them to require almost a bureau of information to answer his innumerable questions. Mr. Barnum happened to be the one questioned, and he was asked their age, occupation, original home, whether they were single or married, their weight and stature and their religious belief. Nothing, at any rate, was too trivial or irrelevant which the rustic thought of, all of which interested the showman intensely.

Finally the bucolic visitor started slowly but reluctantly to leave, but after walking away a few steps he returned and said, with the most solemn simplicity:

"They are brothers, I presume."—Success Magazine.

Cheerless English Houses.

A writer in Harper's Magazine says: "I doubt if the English live longer than we for living less comfortably. The lower classes seem always to have colds, the middle classes rheumatism and the upper class gout, by what one sees or hears. Rheumatism, one might almost say (or quite if one did not mind what one said) is universal in England, and all ranks of society have the facilities for it in the indoors cold in which they otherwise often undeniably flourish." And a writer in Madame tells of a friend's visiting book, in which against certain names she found a "substantial cross" against others two. What was the meaning? Not kisses, as you might infer from reading the humorous accounts of breach of promise cases, but curses. One cross against the country house that was cold in its passages and staircases and two crosses against the house with "no fires in the guests' bedrooms."

The Benefit of Fairy Tales.

It is very reasonable to argue that no creation of human fancy could last as fairy tales have lasted through no one knows how many hundreds and thousands of years unless it was very good, for that which is not good and not sound must surely die, and only that which is good and sound shall last through the grinding of the ages. So I believe that parents could fill their children's imaginations full of fairy tales if they would make those imaginations strong and healthy. As for that man or woman who has not these bright and joyous things flying like golden bees through the dim recesses

of his memory I can only say that I think his or her parents must have been neglectful of the earlier training of their child and that I am sorry for that poor soul who has lost so much pleasure out of its life.—Howard Pyle in Book News.

True diplomacy is to get all you can with as much courtesy as you can.—Rev. Boyd Carpenter.

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